

Creating Professional Image in

3 Steps

Colour, style and fit provide the one, two, three punch in your appearance arena.

1

COLOUR



Colour affects people physically and psychologically

- Dark colours – black, navy and darker shades of grey – psychologically connote power, authority, knowledge, responsibility and success.
- Brown shows that you are dependable and stable – how ever, you lack of power and authority.
- White is a good choice for blouse or shirt since it connotes clean, formal and sophisticated.
- Pastels denote softness and femininity.

For women

- Avoid large amounts of accent colours (colours that are used for emphasis in a colour scheme)
- Avoid wearing neutrals only. Although beige can make you look expensive, it can also look washed out. Add more contrast.
- When introducing a colour into your outfit, repeat it twice.

For men

- Shirt must be lighter than suit or pants.
- Tie must be darker than shirt.
- Tie repeats colour of shirt or pants.

Every colour has a message of its own. How you put them together sends your message.

2

STYLE

Here, business casual takes its toll, if it is power and professionalism you want to convey,

- A suit coat with long sleeves, slightly padded shoulders and a collar make you appear one-third more powerful.
- Shoulder pads add authority.
- Pleats and darts add bulks.
- Vertical lines formed by classic three-button jackets contribute to the illusion of heights, as do pun stripes.
- Single-breasted jackets with a centre vent are best for men and women of average height. Double-breasted jackets complement taller people.

3

FIT

Few people have 'hanger figures'. Almost all of you need help to make your clothes look as if they were made for you.

Many stores offer free tailoring. If not, find a tailor who can do wonders with a nip here and tuck there.

Take the shoes and any other items you will wear with the garment so your tailor can work with the real thing. Basic guideline for business wardrobe:

For ladies jacket:

- The jacket should button comfortably
- Lapel should lie flat against chest, not bow apart
- The back collar should hug your neck, not stand away
- Buttons should be spaced to avoid gapping at the bust line
- Must have a good shoulder pad.

For men shirt:

- Button-down collar – least formal option
- Straight collar – most versatile, correct with virtually any suit style; needs collar-stays to maintain crisp appearance
- Regardless of style, the collar edges must lay flat
- The fuller the face, the wider the collar; the slimmer the face, the straighter the collar
- Long, thin neck – high collar stands
- Short thick neck – collars lie flat
- The collar fit - snug

Knowing you have chosen the right, colour, style and fit for the occasion will give you increased self-confidence, and add immeasurably to your presentation, of yourself, your products and your service.

Source adapted from

Wendy Lee, a Professional Image Consultant for Chapter One Asia Sdn Bhd, 'Grooming for Interview and Workplace for Lecturers of UMP', April 23, 2009